

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An easy-to-manufacture protective saddle for a dumbbell, comprising:

a generally U-shaped member, including:

a curved element having a top surface, a base portion, and an inner end; and

a generally vertical element having an upper end and an interior end attached to said inner end of the U-shaped member; and

at least one means for attachment, each means for attachment having an elongated attachment member located in a complementary void in said base portion;

wherein a non-marring surface for providing contact with a dumbbell to be placed on the saddle is located on said U-shaped member.

2. (Canceled) ~~The saddle of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of means for attachment of the saddle to a frame located in said base portion.~~

3. (Previously Presented) The saddle of claim 1, wherein the non-marring surface is unitary in construction.

4. (Currently Amended) The saddle of claim 3, wherein the non-marring surface is injection molded onto the U-Shaped member.

5. (Currently Amended) The saddle of claim 3, wherein the non-marring surface is sprayed upon the U-shaped member.

6. (Canceled) ~~The saddle of claim 2, wherein the means for attachment include an elongated attachment member located in a complementary void in said base portion.~~

7. (Currently Amended) The saddle of claim 2 1, wherein each attachment member is adapted for use in a complementary cavity in said frame.

8. (Currently Amended) The saddle of claim 6 1, wherein the means for attachment are securely connected to the base portion.

9. (Currently Amended) The saddle of claim 1, wherein the ~~vertical member~~ generally vertical element further comprises a divot for accommodating a handle on said dumbbell.

10. (Currently Amended) The saddle of claim 1, wherein the non-marring surface includes polyurethane.

11. (Withdrawn) A method for forming a saddle for a dumbbell, comprising the steps of:

forming a core having a generally U-shaped member, having:

a curved element having a top surface, a base portion, and an inner end; and

a generally vertical element having an upper end and an interior end attached to said inner end of the U-shaped member; and

a plurality of voids located through the base portion;

placing means for attachment through the voids whereby means for attachment extend below the base;

forming a non-marring surface for providing contact with a dumbbell to be placed on the saddle located at least on a top portion of the U-shaped member and on the interior end of the vertical element.

12. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of forming comprises the steps of:

placing the core at least partially within a mold; and

placing a substance which forms a non-marring surface into the mold and around the core, whereby at least a portion of the means for attachment is not covered in the substance.

13. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 11, wherein the means for attachment are securely connected to the base portion before the core is placed in a mold.

14. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 13, wherein the means for attachment comprise a threaded bolt.

15. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 11, wherein the substance is a rubber that adheres to the core.

16. (Currently Amended) An easy-to-manufacture frame for a plurality of dumbbells, comprising:

a plurality of pairs of saddles oriented to accommodate each weight on a dumbbell, each saddle comprising:

a generally U-shaped member, including:

a curved element having a top surface, a base portion, and an inner end; and

a vertical element having an upper end and an interior end attached to said inner end of the U-shaped member;

a plurality of means for attaching the saddle to said frame;

each said means for attaching having an elongated attachment member located in a complementary void in said base portion;

wherein said frame comprises complementary holes for the means for attaching;

wherein a non-marring surface for providing contact with a dumbbell to be placed on the saddle is located on said U-shaped member.

17. (Canceled) ~~The frame of claim 16, further comprising a plurality of means for attachment of the saddle to a frame located in said base portion.~~

18. (Canceled) ~~The frame of claim 16, wherein said frame comprises complementary holes for the means for attaching.~~